



WHAT IS THE NATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE MACEDONIAN SLAVS?

By Professor Heinrich A.Stammler

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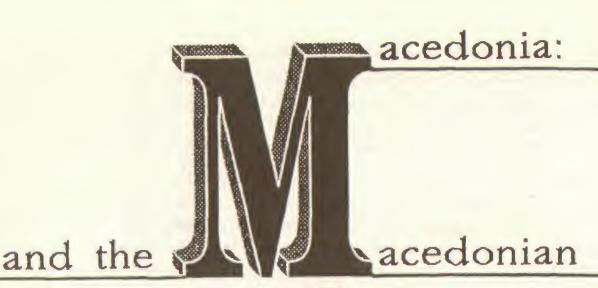


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During 1937-1940, he was an instructor in modern foreign languages at the Svistov Business College in Bulgaria. In addition to his native language, he speaks fluently and has written numerous books and articles in German, English, Russian and other European languages.

The following is a lecture delivered by Professor Stammler in the United States to an audience of Bulgarian immigrants from Macedonia and their descendants, who now live permanently in the USA.



uestion.

This is the first issue in the series of "Macedonia: and the Macedonian Question".

Throughout the series, we will be inviting emminent academics and political figures from around the world to view, examine and comment

on this most difficult of socio-political problems.

The series will deal at length with all aspects of the question, from the ancient movements and settlements of peoples to the most up-to-date polls and censuses; from the manipulation of people by the use of force and terror to the more insidious techniques of modern propaganda; and from the development of early slavic languages to the present, unprecedented accusations of the creation of a new, "literary standard language", all of which have been used to convince a people of who

they are and what they are not!

Ultimately, this publication hopes to help the efforts being made to set straight the problems within the region known as Macedonia and to disentangle the knot of misinformation, hidden facts and lies, all of which has resulted in particular interpretations (or misinterpretations) of history. This is the legacy of many periods of instability, dating back to the 1877 - 78 Russo-Turkish War and the Bulgarian liberation, the Berlin Treaty of 1879 and decades of Serbianization and of the far more protracted and subtle Hellenization of the Southern region of Macedonia. Of course, the last 45 years of totalitarian rule has done more to bury the truth than any other single force, but this series will endeavour to confront the expantionist nationalism that presently seeks to continue its history of falsification and oppression of the Bulgarian character of Macedonia.

By presenting the views of outside observers and "innocent bystanders", we feel sure that this series will help to give the clearest and most objective view of the problems and their best solutions and will serve as an essential companion to the other publications, concerning this problem, which have more "involved" contributers.

We are certain that, in the end, by careful work and study, the truth will out and real and, above all, just solutions will be found and

adopted.

Andy Barrett

Mr. President, Dear friends, Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all please allow me to express my sincerest gratitude to the President of this Organization and to the Committee for having afforded me the precious opportunity of addressing this Conference. Time is short and I do not want to claim your attention longer than is absolutely necessary. I honestly feel that perhaps my justification for speaking to you about the problems of Macedonia is somewhat flimsy. What are my credentials? It is true, I am a professor of Slavic and East European Studies, but as far as my teaching and writing is concerned, Russia and, more recently, Poland have come more closely under my observation. I hope, nevertheless, that you might forgive me my boldness to appear here before you when I refer to a point of saving grace in my favour: I love the Southeast of Europe, and five wonderful years of my life were spent in Bulgaria in the capacities of an academic teacher and a public servant. There I had the opportunity of meeting people from all walks of life, of making myself familiar with the history, the culture and living conditions of the country and last but not least, of striking up close and firm friendships, some of which have survived the trials and tribulations of the catastrophic events which living through has been our common lot. I also availed myself of the possibility of making a trip to Macedonia and, although the journey was short, places like Kratovo, Skopie, Veles, Shtip and Gorna Dzumaya are for me not merely names, geographic nomenclature or statistical data, but I can say: I was there; I saw, I listened and heard; I have not forgotten!

I will not go into a presentation of the manifold facts of history, ethnography, linguistics, folklore and statistics which bear testimony - and I think this testimony is incontrovertible - of the Bulgarian character of the Slavic-speaking population settled in Macedonia. Whole libraries have been written to establish the Bulgarianism of the Macedonian Slavs and I believe that many of you are much more intimately familiar with this vast literature than I could ever be. And, Indeed, it would be absurd if I, a mere outside observer, and only an occasional one at that, would presume to teach you things

which you not only know, but live.

Let me, however, point out one circumstance which in my eyes, has profoundly changed the whole situation. Up to the Second World War the Bulgarian Macedonians, after the retreat of Turkey from Europe, had to struggle incessantly for the preservation of their heritage against the encroachment and machinations of the Pan-Serbian circles, carried under the slogan that Macedonia is nothing but Southern Serbia; and on the other hand they had to fight the absurd notion propounded

by Athens, that the Bulgarian-speaking Macedonians are but "Slavophone Greeks". That would be the same as if the English would assert that the French-Canadians are but "Francophone" English people! Recent events have taught us what reactions to expect from the French-Canadians if such insinuations were to be made.

I believe, however, that it was easier to counter the Pan-Serbian claims, even though they were dressed in the political scholarship of men like A.Belic and Jovan Cvijic, because here was only the matter of a spirited and well-reasoned defense against the illegitimate ambitions of expansionists, which was, at bottom, still old fashioned nationalism. And this is still the situation in which the Macedo-Bulgarians find themselves under Greek rule.

I wish, however, to call your attention to a much more sinister device concocted in Belgrade under the sign of the Red Star, the Hammer and the Sickle. That the invention of a separate Macedonian nation, a Macedonian literary language and even a Macedonian history, is divorced from all the evidences of historical research and scholarship. By sophistry and the distortion of the historical facts it is said, for example, that St.Clement of Ochrid was a member of some separate Macedonian people which has never exited, and that the language used by the apostles and teachers of the Slavs for the christianization and the enlightenment of the Slavonic world was a separate Macedonian idiom, which has nothing or only very little to do with the Bulgarian language as such. In order to find some historical foundation for these unproven and undemonstrable allegations, historians of this school have even restyled the West-Bulgarian Kingdom of Tsar Samuel as a state run for the benefit of the mythical separate Macedonian people. Let me quote only one authority, the eminent Russian byzantologist, A. A. Vassilijev, whose monumented history of the Byzantine Empire is generally considered a standard work in this field. What has he to say about the national character of Falls Pan-Serbian and Samuels Kingdom?" After the death of John Tzimisoes the Bulgarians took advantage of the internal complications in the Empire and rebelled against Byzantine domination. The outstanding leader of this period was Samuel, the energetic ruler of Western independent Bulgaria, and probably the founder of a new dynasty, one of the most prominent rulers of the First Bulgarian Empire." In the entire passage dealing with this heroic, as well as tragic episode in Bulgarian history, Vassiljev consistently uses the term "Bulgaria". In a footnote, it is true, he mentions the hypothesis put forward by the Serbian historian D. Anastasijevich that Samuel's Kingdom was not lawfully Bulgarian, but a "Sloveno-macedonian Empire". But

Greek claims. Distortion of historical facts about the Bulgarians in Macedonia.

quite obviously he does not make this hypothesis his own. I think that in the market of international historical scholarship the authority of Professor Vassiljev rates considerably higher than that of Mr. Anastasijevich. Another noteworthy fact that is such attempts to deprive the Bulgarians of their history and heritage by declaring that they were not Bulgarians at all, had already been made in the years soon after the First World War. This shows that the recent creation of a separate non-Bulgarian Macedonian nation, complete with history, literary language, folklore, etc., by fiat from above, does have its precedent.

It goes without saying that the endeavors to divest the Macedo-Bulgarians of their national identity were accompanied in recent times by violent measures designed to lend force to the arguments set forth by Pan-Serbian propaganda, no matter whether this propaganda appeared disguised as scholarship or downright indoctrination. Let me quote from a symposium entitled," The case for an Autonomous Macedonia" compiled and edited in 1945 by Mr. Christ Atanasoff. One of the crown witnesses summoned to testify was the well-known British Balkan expert, Miss Edith Durham. In 1931, she wrote the following in the paper La Macedonian, published in Geneva: "During the Balkan War there was a Serbian schoolmaster - an Austrian subject - at Cetinje, who taught German in the boy's school. He rejoiced greatly over the conquest the Serbian army was making in Macedonia. It would add much valuable land to Serbia. An Englishman said to him: "Oh, but Serbia cannot annex these places, they are all Bulgar". The inhabitants put the article after the noun. This is well known as a Bulgar peculiarity. The Serb replied: "That does not matter. When our army has been there for two years, you will find no articles after nouns there, I can assure you". But, in spite of torture, murder, imprisonment, the Bulgar article still lives on at the end of the noun."

Since it was not possible to do away with that stubborn post posited article by administrative matters, comprising the whole gamut from violent suppression to persistent persuasion and bribery, a new tack had to be tried. The article was declared not to be a peculiarity of the Bulgarian language, but also a Bulgarian Kingdom. characteristic of a hitherto non-existent separate Macedonian language.

In parenthesis let me say this: Since the disappearance of the classical, semi-Hellenic Macedonian Kingdom of Philip, Alexander and Perseus in Roman times, the terms "Macedonian" and the "Macedonia" have been used as geographic terms for that area in Southeastern Europe, which is still known under this name. Since the middle ages it has been inhabited predominantly by Slavo-Bulgarians and by

The Macedonian Slavs speak Bulgarian. Samuel Tsar of Westminorities of Albanians, Valachians, Turks, Greeks, Gypsies, Jews and, as the statistics of the 19th and 20th Centuries show, surprisingly few Serbians. For more than a thousand years the Slavs living in this area have been considered Bulgarians, or to be more precise, Western Bulgarians whose idiom is distinguished by certain dialectical peculiarities, without thereby losing its general Bulgarian character. This clearly recognized fact, incidentally, caused the great 19th century philologists, who laid the groundwork for a systematic study of this language to call it, in the early stages of its development, Old Bulgarian. The language employed by Sts.Cyril and Metodi, St. Klement and St. Naum and a host of other medieval writers and teachers is an old Bulgarian idiom. Please allow me to make a personal remark in this context. When I, in the spring of 1931, began to study Slavic philology at the University of Munich, we used the famous handbooks and grammar of this language written by the celebrated German Slavist, August Leskich. These books described and analyzed the phonology, morphology, vocabulary syntax of a language which unequivocally was designated as Old Bulgarian :Handbuch or Grammatik der Altbulgarichen Sprache. It is also true that the term "Old Church Slavonic", most frequently used nowadays, was sometimes applied to this language, but one should keep in mind that this term is basically meaningless, at least up to the times of Peter the Great. In the course of his secularizing transformations and reforms. Peter favored the introduction of the Russian vernacular into common usage, relegating the then library language of the Muscovite Tsardom, still based as it were on Old Bulgarian, to purely liturgical and ecclesiastical purposes. This practice was later followed by other awakening Slavic nations, especially those of the Orthodox faith profoundly. Nevertheless may it be said here, in parenthesis only, that the Old Bulgarian imprint on the native language of the Russians was so strong that even nowadays authoritative scholars in the field of Slavic linguistics and philology, such as Boris Unbegaun, speak with good reason about the partially Old Bulgarian character of the Russian standard literary language.

Thus, the fiction of Macedonia as "Southern Serbia" could not be maintained in the long run because it really held no water. Even responsible Serbian leaders could not close their eyes to this fact. Even the Yugoslav Ambassador in Sofia, Mr.Milanovich, in a moment of deep crisis for the Yugoslav State, that is in the summer of 1940, saw fit to forward to his master in Belgrade the Prime Minister Stojadinovich, a statement from Macedonia received in Bulgaria on the situation in this region. Here we read: "Everybody has to know

The article - a
peculiarity of the
Bulgarian language.
"Macedonia" or
"Macedonian" used as
geographic designation
There is no separate
Macedonian language.

that today Macedonia is not lost for Bulgaria, but on the contrary, there exists a healthy Bulgarian spirit more than ever. Some call themselves Macedonians, but this is due to the terrible reaction which the name Bulgarian provokes in the Serbians. It is well known that all injustices, robbery and violence create reaction and disgust. This is exactly what the Serbians have achieved in Macedonia. When they came to Macedonia they knew that Bulgarians lived in this country. That is why they thought, by crude measures and lawlessness, to frighten the people and to win them over for the Serbian cause. But all was in vain. And now they are surprised at the anti-Serbian feelings in the hearts of the majority of people. The common wish of the people is: Let Gypsy come, only let this one, the Serbian, go away. Anathema to any Bulgarian who

will forget his own brothers.". The war and its aftermath did away with the Pan-Serbian military-bourgeois monarchy. Overboard went what Marxists call Bourgeois nationalism and chauvinism. But let no man be deceived that the substitution of the old order by the dictatorship of a Communist party and its leader spelt the disappearance of an expansionist Greater Serbian nationalism. Had the means employed between 1912 and 1940 been crude and brutal, and therefore in the end unsuccessful, new devices had to be invented, this time more clever, more insidious, in order to attain the same goal. This time under the banner of a Yugoslav Communist Revolution! If we have failed so far wean away the Macedonians from their Bulgarianism, because we tried so hard to make them into Serbians, well, then let us now try to insinuate that they are neither Serbians nor Bulgarians, but a separate national entity, for instance, Macedonians with their own history, language and culture; but let us also make it perfectly clear to them that only we here in Belgrade are willing and able to guarantee this artificial nationality concocted in the test tubes of Serbian Communists and their non-Communist predecessors. The whole Macedonian nation and the so called language -this I wish to affirm here before you- is not a philologicum, but a politicum designed according to the well tried maxim of old: divide et impera - divide and rule. History teaches that a ruler, a party or a leading group which enjoys unlimited power and has the will to use this power ruthlessly for the attainment of its goal, has always found partisans, advocates and adherents prepared to do the bidding of those at the helm of the state, sometimes against their own better knowledge. Wasn't it one of the great cynics on the throne, Henry the VIII of England, who said when planning something particularly outrageous and arbitrary "let me first carry out this measure, afterwards I

The inhabitants of Southeastern Europe are predominantly Slavo-Bulgarians. The Western Bulgarians (Macedonians) have not lost their Bulgarian character.

shall always find professors at Oxford to justify it". So it is no wonder that in Skopie and elsewhere the Belgrade government should have found learned collaborators who fell for their line. I think that under the circumstances prevailing one should not judge them and their zealous efforts too harshly. But it is deplorable that scholars abroad with solid academic reputations and achievements, who are not exposed to the pressures of the intellectual under totalitarian regimes, should also swallow this latest Belgrade bait hook, line and sinker. Can they really accept the thesis that, contrary to their own testimony and conviction, people like the Miladinoff brothers, Gregory Perlicerr, Alexander Todoroff, Damjan Gruev, Gotse Delceff, Peju Javoroff, Anton Strashimirof, Dimitr Taleff are Macedonians in the sense of the word bestowed upon it with the blessings of the Belgrade party bosses? And what about men who figure so prominently in the Pantheon of Bulgarian letters like Ivan Vazoff and Teodor Trajanoff who lived and worked in Bulgaria proper, but whose family background is Macedonian, Bulgaro-Macedonian that is. What about such a significant figure of the Bulgarian Renaissance like Raiko Zhinzifoff from Veles, who declared in 1963 in his Novobulgarska sbirka - or did he, perhaps, call it Novo-Makedonska sbirka? "As Bulgarian language we regard that language which is spoken in all Macedonia, Thrace and Bulgaria proper. The differences between the dialects are negligible. Every Bulgarian who does not suffer from nearsighteness cannot designate a certain expression as "Macedonian" or "Thracian", for there are no "Macedonians" or "Thracians" as individual nations, but only Slavo-Bulgarians - in short, one Bulgarian people and one Bulgarian language".

One could object here that this is a voice from the long forgotten depth of the 19th century. One could also maintain that Zhinzifoff, with all his linguistic and folklore erudition, was not up to par with regard to the achievements of philological science, that is that we in the 20th century know better now. Let us then examine a few testimonies belonging to our century.

Let us first listen to the voice of practical common sense, the voice of a man who would never lay claim to the reputation of a learned academic linguist. The opinions of this man, however, deserve to be listened to attentively and carefully because they are based on the profound national experience of a statesman and a leader of his people, Ivan Mihailoff.In his book, Makedonia: A Switzerland of the Balkans, edited and translated by Christ Anastasoff, he makes the following observations pertinent to the linguistic problem: "Like the

The Macedonian Slavs are Bulgarians and speak a Bulgarian dialect.

A healthy Bulgarian spirit exists in Yugoslav Macedonia.

ETHNOGRAPHICAL MAP OF MACEDO

The map was prepared by Professor Vasil Kantchev during 1900 with the following statistics: Turks 499,204; Bulgarians 1,181,336; Greeks 228,703; Albanians 128,711; Wallachians 80,767; Jews 67,840; Gypsies 54,557; Serbians 700; Misellaneous 16,407. Total 2,268,224.

Taking into consideration the various aspirations of the Balkan states upon Macedonia, the Carnegue International Commission drew the following conclusion:

"The Bulgarian statistics alone take into account the consciousness of the people themselves. The Serbian calculations are generally based on the results of the study of dialects and on the identity of customs; they are therefore largely theoretic and abstract in character. The Greek calculations are even more artificial, since their ethnic standard is the influence exercised by Greek civilization on the urban populations, and even the traces of classical antiquity. "The same difficulties meets us when we leave population statistics and turn to geographical distribution. From an ethnographical point of view the population of Macedonia is extremely mixed. The old maps, from that of Ami Boue (1847) down, follow tradition in regarding the Slav population of Macedonia as Bulgarian. Later local charts make whole country either Serbian, or Greek. An attempt at more exact delineation, based on topical study, is of recent date. There are, for example, Mr. Kantchev's maps, representing Bulgarian opinion, and the better known one of Mr. Tsviyits representing Serbian. But Mr. Tsviyits' ethnographic ideas vary also with the development of Serbia's political pretensions. In 1900 he gave "Old Serbia" a different outline from that he gave in 1911 (see his map published in the "Petermann" series); and in the hour of Serbian victory on the eve of the second Balkan war, another professor at Belgrade University, Mr.Belits, published his map, based on a study of dialects, a map which satisfied the most recent and immoderate pretensions". (see the Report of the International Commission the Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars, pp. 30-31).



NIA

This ethnografical map of Macedonia was inserted in the Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C. 1914).



scholars of different countries who were familiar with Macedonia, so also did the Turkish authorities and all the rest of the objective observers consider the Macedonian Slavs as Bulgarians. This was not only upon the basis of the logically had introduced in their schools, but on the basis of all other ethnic features by which a given nationality is judged. The local dialects of the Macedonian Slavs are basically considered by all as Bulgarian language. Every nationality employs its own common literary language, while in every nationality meets different dialects. As far as the Bulgarian dialects in Macedonia are concerned they do not vary very much from the rest of the Bulgarian dialects as, for instance, do dialects among the Germans, Italians and other nationalities. The dialects of the Germans in Switzerland is, perhaps, the most difficult for all the rest of the Germans.

But that did not prevent the Swiss of German origin to consider as their own the common German literary language. Precisely so, before the appearance of the regimes of national oppression in Macedonia after 1912, the native Bulgarians officially used that literary language which is common for all the Bulgarians of the world and to the formation of which the cultural workers of Macedonia have contributed a great deal." This point of view deserves to be firmly kept in mind, especially in view of the artificial construction of a new "Macedonian" nation and language as commanded from above. For this purpose the chief perpetrators of this dubious enterprise now take great pains to smuggle into this newfangled synthetic idiom all sorts of Serbanianist and other foreign ingredients so as to alienate the Macedo-Bulgarians from their historical, cultural and linguistic matrix.

But what has the linguistic science of the 20-th century to say about these attempts to deny the Bulgarian character of the Slavic idiom spoken in Macedonia? Here I cannot go into the details of the lingiustic argument adduced by international scholars, to refute the claims. To note that Professor A.M.Selishchev, the eminent Russian philologist, in his article entitled "Macedonian Dialectology and Serbian Linguistics" already in 1935 destroyed the claims of Serbian scholars like Velich, Djordjevich, Pavlovich and others that the idiom spoken in Macedonia is closer to Serbian than to Bulgaria should be enough. This task he performed in a thorough scholary way, basing himself upon the findings and achievements of modern linguistic research in the field of Slavic philology. Whoever is interested in the course of his irrefutable reasonic can study this article in a volume recently published by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences under the title L'histoire Bulgare dans les Ouvrages des Savants Europeens.

The Turkish authorities and all objective observers consider the Macedonian Slavs as Bulgarians.

Belgrade creates an artificial "Macedonian" nation and "Macedonian language." Professor Selishchev cannot be suspected of any sort of politicing. He has worked in Russia under the old as well as the new regime; following nothing, to the best of his abilities, but the dictates of his scientific conscience. It is remarkable to see how to this pure scholar and cabinet savant, far as he was from the passionate turmoil of the political motives behind the scientific smokescreen spread by the named Serbian scholars. He said: "The aim of all these books is the same: namely, to furnish an historical, ethnographic and linguistic justification for Serbian domination in Macedonia - to furnish this justification by means of true scholarship. The arrogance in the style, the irony with which the Bulgarian people are treated is another common feature of the books of Belgrade professors. In the case of Professor Georgevich this irony borders upon downright rudeness. On the other hand, everything Serbian is idealized. The attempts of the authors of such books to clothe their products in a science-like garb must be unmasked. The true character of their content, harmful to all science, must be demonstrated".

The results of the linguistic and ethnographic research in the field of Macedo-Bulgarian studies undertaken by Professor Selishchev not so long ago match the findings not only of the Bulgaro-Macedonian philologist Kruste Misirkoff, which he published in 1910-1911, but also of a number of 19th century Serbian scholars like Stefan Verkovich, Tuminski, A.Hadzic, Vasa Peladic and others. That authors like Selishchev, Misirkoff and Verkovic working at different times and under completely different circumstances should have arrived at the same results, with regard to the Bulgarian character of the dialects spoken in Macedonia and their geographic extensions points to two noteworthy qualities of their research Its exactitude and its factual and logical consistency, in view of which all the counter-arguments of Serbian and Pseudo-Macedonian opponents take on the suspect colouring of sophisty and political expediency. More proof was recently given for the Bulgarianism of the Macedonian dialects by the Bulgarian philologist Blagoi Shklifoff in a paper about the idiom spoken in the area of Kostur. From the evidence he is able to muster, it becomes perfectly clear that the Kostur dialect cannot be used to buttress the hypothetical existence of a separate and individual Slavic language called Macedonian, but that here, as elsewhere, we deal with but another variant of the Bulgarian language as spoken by the Western half of the nation. If indeed, this is the conclusion at which Mr. Shklifoff arrives, the dialects in Macedonia are by their character intrinsically different from those spoken in Moesia and Thrace, then these differences would have to show more than

Prof. Selishchev and other European scholars negate the Serbian claim about the Macedonian Slavs.

anywhere else in the dialect of Kostur, the area of which borders on two non-Slavic linguistic regions, located geographically distant from the other Bulgarian dialects. A strictly scholary approach to this idiom, however, cannot but establish its basically Bulgarian character. The paper by Mr.Blagoi Shklifoff was published in 1968. Sclishches's analysis and demolition of the claims raised in 1935. But the same position and results are visible in the book about Macedonia by the Czech Balkaniologic Vladimir Sis which was printed in Prague in 1914 and came out in Zurich, Switzerland in 1981 in a German translation. After Sis enumerates all the factors which effect the closest mutual correspondence between Old Bulgarian and the Modern Bulgarian language as spoken also in Macedonia, he points to certain philological peculiarities by means of which the Bulgarian language is distinguished from all other Slavic language, Serbian included. After a painstaking comparison between the Bulgarian standard literary language and various dialects spoken in Macedonia, he arrives at the following conclusion which I shall quote here verbatim "Whoever is familiar with the basic structural principles of the two neighboring languages must, even though he may not be a philologist, arrive, on the basis of the examples cited here, at the same conclusion to which also the French slavicist, Louis Leger, came, and I repeat his words: The Macedonian Slavs are Bulgarians and speak a Bulgarian dialect. Indeed, even the Serbian Vuk Karadzic, who was the first to publish some Macedonian folksongs, selected them in order to determine with their help the basic characteristics of the Bulgarian language. That there occur Serbanianisms in some North Macedonian dialects does not prove anything. It is inevitable that in border areas between two linguistically kindred groups a certain interminigling of vocabulary takes place. If the fin Serbianisms in the regions of Tetovo or Kumanovo, we also find Bulgarianisms in the Prizren dialect behind the Shar Planina, a purely Serbian area. Even Serbian scholars The Russian scholar Hilferding says in his book An Excursion Into Hersegovina And Old Serbia:" In the language of the Serbians around Prizren it is clearly noticeable how much it tends to resemble the Bulgarian dialects. It would be interesting to investigate how this blend of the Serbian language with the Macedo-Bulgarian has come about."That authorities marshalled here in such an imposing array would be sufficient to support and prove the point I wish make here, namely, that the language spoken by the Slavs between Skopie and Salonica, Kostur and Kustandil is neither Serbian nor "Macedonian", but Bulgarian. Please allow me to invite one more witness to make his deposition. The man and scholar I am

of the 19th century consider the Macedonian Slavs as Bulgarians.

refering to is a former countryman, Professor Gustav Weigand, the eminent German Balkanologist, ethnographer, linguist and lexicographer. Weigang ordinarily was no Slavist. When he began his career, his research interests were centered in Rumania and Albania. He is one of the very few Western Scholars to give the world a grammar and reader of the Albanian language. But in the course of his studies he became convinced that he would have to embrace with his research also the Slavic groups settling in this, as Christ Atanasoff has called it, tragic peninsula. This extension of his studies had the effect that Weigang became also a linguistic expert in the Modern Bulgarian language, a field in which again he proved himself as grammarian and lexicographer. In 1924, he published in Leipzig his fundamental work Ethnographic von Macedonien, a chapter of which is devoted under the headline "The Bulgarian Language As Spoken In Macedonia" (Das Makedonische Bulgarisch) to linguistic issues. The result of Weigand's meticulous observations do not essentially diverge from the findings of the other students of these affairs, quoted in this context. But in one point, at least as far as I can see on the basis of the limited number of documents available to me, Weigang had an intuition which had not occured, at least in so many words, to other scholars. He was, of course, fully aware of what was going on at that time in Macedonia, a period which Ivan Michailov, as we have seen, so aptly called "The Regimes Of National Oppression". He must have speculated which devices, apart from brute force, the oppressors might yet use to achieve their goal - the denationalization of the Macedo-Bulgarians. As a well-trained experienced linguist and ethnographer it was, in all probability, clear to him that all the attempts at Serbanization would end in futility and frustration. But then - what other means could the enemy of the Bulgarian nationality propose to undermine and destroy Macedonian Bugarianism? And here he hit intuitively what was to happen 20 years later. The artificial, test tube creation of a separate Macedonian History, literary language and nation. Here are the conclusions at which Weigang arrived after a conscientious examination of the linguistic and ethnographic facts: "Whatever segment of this language we analyze, again and again it becomes evident that we deal here not with the Scrbian, but the Bulgarian language. All attempts of Serbian chauvinists to design the Bulgarian language as spoken in Macedonia as a Serbian dialect or as a mixed language of indefinite character will therefore end in failure. One could pose the question whether, perhaps, the Macedonian Slavs haven't their own language, something in between Serbian and Bulgarian. Such an assumption, however, would be absolutely unjustified, for,

The language spoken by the Slavs between Skopie and Salonica, Kostur and Kustendil is neither Serbian nor "Macedonian" but Bulgarian.

Macedonian Bulgarian and Bulgarian proper harmonize in every respect. Certain exclusively Macedonian peculiarities cannot essentially change this picture. In the lexicon there occurs a number of words of Greek or Turkish origin which do not exist in the Serbian or Bulgarian vocabulary. In proportion to the overall lexicon, however, their number is quite insignificant, as can be seen from the linguistic samples adduced here, which clearly demonstrate that Macedonian can

only be considered a Bulgarian Dialect". In the 1926, the Russian journalist L.Nemanov, a representative of the respectable emigre newspaper Poslednie Novosti, edited in Paris, travelled in what then was officially called "Southern Serbia". He published a report about his impressions and experiences under the title, "What I Saw in Macedonia". His findings are those of a man who was probably a good practical linguist, but certainly not a learned professor of linguistics. They felicitously supplement the results of strict academic research, in his own trend of observant impressionism. he relates: "The Serbian authorities insist that the language spoken by the population in Macedonia is not Bulgarian, but a Macedonian dialect of the Serbian language. This reminds me of a case when a Serbian man of science was trying to prove to me that in general there was no Bulgarian language, but that it was a Shop diaject of the Serbian, to which I seriously retorted that Russian as an independent language was nonexistent to except as a Moscow dialect of the Serbian language. That is why whatever the Serbian politicians call the language in Macedonia, it is a fact that this local language is comprehensible to me, a man knowing a bit of Bulgarian, while it is difficult for me to understand Serbian". This statement, not devoid of humor as it is, may furnish some comic relief after all the dry seriousness of philological research and linguistic inquiry. But one should not forget that it is the question of depriving a people of its national identity, the first blows are invariably directed at its language, because a common language, a common heritage and a common destiny are the chief characteristics of historical nationality. And the pride in just this heritage and the hopes and aspirations of a common destiny, in return, are expressed in just this common language. So the best way to emasculate a national group is to rob it of its native tongue or to corrupt it. If it should turn out impossible to extirpate the language of a group one desires to oppress and destroy - well, then let's try to persuade them and the world that their language does not exist at all, that in reality it is quite another language they are speaking, a language of whose existence they had not even dreamed before, which,

A recent visitor to Macedonia ridicules the Serbian claim to the Macedonian dialect. He considers it as Bulgarian.

however, exists because we tell them so. You do not speak Bulgarian, you have never spoken Bulgarian, neither have St.Cyril, St.Methodius, St.Clemens, Tsar Simeon or Tsar Samuel. They have all spoken Macedonian only, ignorant and unenlightened as they were, they didn't notice. The same is true of the Miladinoff, Gotse Delchev, Peju Javoroff or Teodor Trajanoff. They did not know, but now they are better informed because we tell them so.

A nation which will not surrender its own national identity and national heritage, will not give up its native tongue, the treasure house of all its achievements and aspirations. When the Israelis and the Irish succeeded in re-establishing their own state, it was the first legitimate, and natural endeavor of their leading minds to recapture their lost or half-lost native idioms and restore them to their rightful glory. When, before the First World War, the Prussian government undertook to ban instruction in Polish in the schools in the eastern provinces of Prussia these decrees were bitterly and resolutely resisted by the Polish minority. In the end, all these measures proved futile, but they have contributed to poisoning the atmosphere between Germans and Poles down to our own day. The press tells us what undesirable things happened in the Southern Tyrol where the Italian government shows but scant regard for the cultural rights of the German-speaking minority. Alas, these examples, spread all over the globe, could be multiplied ad infinitum. It also shows that even at a time when many of the more advanced nations are making great moral efforts to overcome a narrow-minded, self-centered and often aggressive nationalism there persists the feeling that questions of language and national identity cannot and must not be resolved by either brute force or cunning persuasion, or by distortion and falsification of the historical and statistical facts. In his attempts to explain the origins of human language, the great German humanist, statesman and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt once declared that all research in this problem leads to a point where further explanation avails nothing, where even the keenest, most critical intelligence will have to admit that human language in its deepest well-springs is a divine miracle. From the times of the ancient Helenes on, the nations have delighted in their own languages, have recorded them not only with the intelligent curiosity of science and scholarship, but also with a sense of awe and wonder. At bottom, their languages have always appeared to them as a precious vessel, a national possession cherished above all other things, a sacred covenant with their inscrutable destiny. As long as there is one living soul also among the Macedo-Bulgarians who remembers

Through deceit and falsification, the Belgrade Serbo-Communists are trying to negate the existence of the Bulgarian language in Macedonia.

this deep in his heart and acts accordingly, the Macedo-Bulgarian cause is not lost. Keep the banner of your language flying, then the hope for a free Macedonia for the Macedo-Bulgarians will be resurrected again and again, and in the end, if Heaven wills it so, Macedonia's goal will be fulfilled.



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МАКЕДОНСКИ БУГАРА.

CKTRIO

СТВФАНЪ И, ВЕРКОВИКЪ.

кибига прва.

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У БЕОГРАДУ.

Правителственомъ Кивигонечативомъ

1860.

In phonology, morphology and syntax "Macedonian" and Bulgarian harmonize in every respect.

The language in Bulgaria proper, Macedonia and Thrace is the same - Bulgarian.

Monument of the Bulgarian character in Macedonia - book by the famous Serbian author Stefan Vercovich under the title -"Popular songs of The Macedonian Bulgarians" - Belgrad/1860

Macedonia: and the Macedonian Question.

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE MACEDONIAN SLAVS?

By Professor Heinrich A.Stammler

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The Stamp of The Bulgarian Church Community in Thessaloniki